

Mr. Mayor and Council Members,

I am Maury Siskel living at 4516 Cummings Drive.

I have learned that the City has agreed to purchase the old Food Lion Building at Rufe Snow and Glenview with no input or approval from the the voters in our City. Also, it appears to be public knowledge that the reason for this purchase was related to the mistaken assumption that the widening of Loop 820 would make the Library & Rec Center unusable. After seeing the plans for Loop 820, it is obvious that the widening will have little if any impact on using the present Library and Rec Center, and more than adequate parking will remain after all work on Loop 820 in finished.

There have also been published claims by Arcadia bragging that they have received 29 consecutive, unopposed approvals of concessions from this Council. But there have been no identification of these concessions.

I've also heard that some arrangement has been made to relocate our present City Hall to a new facility in Hometown.

I'd like for the Council to address publicly the reasons for purchasing the Food Lion property. Further such information should include future plans for the Library and the Rec Center as well as disclosure of all concessions made by the City to Arcadia.

Finally, I believe the City should state publicly their intentions for the present City Hall. These intentions should include the current bonded indebtedness related to City Hall and when that debt is scheduled to be paid. If any promises or concessions regarding City Hall have been made, I think these should be made public. Where and when is City Hall going -- if it is to be moved?

You folks are entering budget planning. All of the items I've cited could significantly impact spending. That is why I believe you should publicize the above information as early as possible.



Office of the City Manager

CITY OF NORTH RICHLAND HILLS

June 24, 2004

Mr. Maury Siskel
4516 Cummings Drive
North Richland Hills, TX 76180

Dear Mr. Siskel:

Thank you for presenting your comments to the City Council Monday June 14th. The City Council and City management certainly welcomes information and input from North Richland Hills citizens. However, some the information you presented is inaccurate or there is a misunderstanding regarding many of the points you brought up. I hope this letter will clear up these issues, and provide a more clear understanding of the issues you mentioned.

First, you mentioned that the City had intentions to purchase the old Food Lion building without public input or approval from voters. In fact, the City has purchased this property, and the City Council approved the purchase of this building in open session at the November 10, 2003 City Council meeting. Subsequently, there was a news article in the December 18, 2003 issue of the Star-Telegram. This article reported the purchase price and stated that the facility would be used to house City offices that will be displaced when Loop 820 is expanded. The purchase of this land was discussed in a closed session of the City Council which is allowed under section 551.072 of the Open Meetings Act which states:

"A governmental body may conduct a closed meeting to deliberate the purchase of real property if deliberation in an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the position of the governmental body in negotiations with a third person."

But, as stated above, the purchase of the land was approved in open session.

While there are no specific plans for the use of this building at the present time, the City does intend to use this space for City offices that will be impacted by the Loop 820 widening and/or to provide a branch library or community center in the southern portion of the City when the main Library and the Recreation Center move to a location that is central to all North Richland Hills citizens. With regard to the lack of input or voter approval regarding this purchase, voter approval is not required for the purchase of real property by a governing body. I can assure you that the Mayor and City Council, who are elected by the voters to represent the citizens of North Richland Hills, made the decision to purchase this property because they felt it was in the best interest of the City.

The second point you made was that "the City is mistakenly assuming that the Library and Recreation Center will be impacted by the expansion of Loop 820". The City's knowledge that this expansion will in fact impact not only the Library and Recreation Center but all City offices housed in this facility (Municipal Court, Parks & Recreation Administration, and Citicable) is based on a thorough study of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) expansion plans, meetings with TxDOT engineers, and a thorough assessment of how this will impact access to these facilities and use of these facilities. In fact, the reconstruction of the Rufe Snow Bridge and utility work related to the Loop 820 project has already restricted access to this facility and has resulted in the elimination of some of the parking space available in front of the Library. The Loop 820 expansion project will eliminate 55 parking spaces on the northwest side of the facility and all of the parking spaces (45) to the north of the facility (total of 100 parking spaces). In addition, this project will severely limit access to this facility from the service road. With the widening and removal of parking adjacent to the service road, the north entrance will have to be re-oriented. As you know, the community services provided at these locations are heavily used. Last year, the Library experienced 273,225 visits, 290,700 people visited the Recreation Center to attend special events, participate in health and wellness programs and use the exercise facilities, and Municipal Court processed 24,893 violations which resulted in visits to either pay fines or participate in court proceedings. With this kind of activity at this facility, you can see how the loss of 100 parking spaces will severely impact its use, this is in addition to the fact that the current main entrance to the Recreation Center would have to be relocated if the Recreation Center were to remain at this facility, which would require major interior renovations.

The City does have plans to relocate the Library and the Recreation Center to the Home Town area. This is in line with plans for this area to become our City's "downtown". There are no plans to relocate City Hall. Plans for Home Town, also known as Town Center, have been very public and have received a significant amount of media attention. I have attached a time line of public meetings on items related to this project as well as a time line of media coverage and articles that have appeared in the City's newsletter since the inception of the Home Town concept. In general, discussions about this project began in late 1997 and there have been over 60 public agenda items including public hearings, public meetings, and/or public agenda items before the City Council as well as two public forums held at the onset of this project. The public forums included citizens, stakeholders and any other interested parties. These public forums were held to receive input and ideas regarding Home Town, and this is where the idea to locate public facilities such as the Library and Recreation Center in this area was generated. There were also a number of public hearings and meetings before the Planning and Zoning Commission, and a joint public meeting of the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Park and Recreation Board and the Land Use Ad Hoc Committee held on June 29, 1999. There were also 10 public hearing and agenda items related to the creation of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District that includes Home Town, and at least 7 presentations to local civic and neighborhood organizations including the Northeast Lions Club, City Boards and Commissions, and information broadcast on the City's cable channel. A number of other public meetings were held

with the governing bodies of the other entities involved in the TIF District including Tarrant County College, Tarrant County Hospital District, and Tarrant County. Fifty-one (51) articles regarding Home Town and plans to locate public facilities in Home Town have appeared in the Star Telegram, the Dallas Morning News, the Dallas Business Journal, the Fort Worth Business Press, and North Richland Hills News since 1997.

Regarding your question about concessions to Arcadia Realty, you mentioned that there were a total of 29 consecutive approved, unopposed concessions to Arcadia Realty. I am not sure what you are referring to in this statement, but I would be happy to discuss this with you. Arcadia has provided the City park land, a site for the recreation center, and several other improvements such as streets. The City also agreed to maintain these, approved drainage plans, and approved plats and zoning. But, I am uncertain what you mean by concessions as this implies that considerations were made without public benefit, which I am not acquainted with. Again, there have been several City Council agenda items and Planning & Zoning Commission agenda items related to this project including the approval of site plans, changes in site plans, and the establishment of zoning for the Town Center District. If you are referring to these items, there is public disclosure of these items as part of our agenda posting requirements and notification of public hearing requirements.

I want to reiterate that there are no current plans to relocate City Hall to Home Town or anywhere else in the City. There is a small section in the TIF 2 District Development Agreement related to City Hall. This was identified in an original plan as there were thoughts that further highway expansion might render City Hall unusable, or the land along Loop 820 would be more valuable as a commercial venture. The City Council was not interested in relocating City Hall when the Home Town Project plan was developed, nor is it now. There are no current plans to relocate City Hall. The City is aware of the impact the Loop 820 Expansion will have on City Hall, and it is not significant enough to justify relocation. You also asked about any remaining debt on City Hall. The City does not have any debt on City Hall.

I hope this information has addressed your concerns and answered your questions. Please feel free to call me if this is not clear or if you need additional information. I would be happy to discuss this with you.

Sincerely,



Larry J. Cunningham
City Manager

cc: Mayor Oscar Trevino
City Council